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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [IZ](#)
SUBJECT: LATEST ON UN PRESENCE IN IRAQ

¶1. (SBU) Summary: During a bi-weekly discussion with the UN and UK on Iraq-related matters, the UN confirmed that newly appointed Special Representative Staffan de Mistura has arrived in Baghdad, and had an introductory call on Foreign Minister Zebari, in which Zebari focused on the UN's role in national reconciliation, national dialogue, capacity building and internal boundaries (especially Kirkuk). The UN also reported that the Iraqi electoral commission has made strides to de-politicize nominations. End summary.

POLICY ISSUES

¶2. (SBU) As of November 15, the UN reported a total of 73 international staff in Baghdad and 26 international staff in Irbil. Darko Mocibob, the UN's Iraq team leader, told USUN and UKUN that plans to resume a UN presence in Basrah are proceeding, and they hope to have the first international staff in Basrah in early 2008. Mocibob said David Shearer, D/SRSG for Humanitarian Affairs will likely visit Basrah in the coming weeks to prepare for a permanent UN presence there. The initial focus of the UN's presence in Basrah will be humanitarian/reconstruction, said Mocibob.

¶3. (SBU) Mocibob noted that de Mistura has arrived in Baghdad. During an introductory call with FM Zebari, the Foreign Minister urged the UN to focus on national reconciliation, regional dialogue, increasing international staff in Iraq, capacity building, and disputed internal boundaries (especially Kirkuk). Regarding Kirkuk, D/SRSG Michael Schulenberg recently visited Kirkuk and Irbil, and came back with positive reports that the Kurds are willing to involve the UN on the Kirkuk issue.

¶4. (SBU) Cynthia Hatfield from the UN's Electoral Assistance Division said that fears of an increasingly politicized Iraqi Election Commission (IHEC) have diminished in recent weeks, following IHEC decisions to make personnel decisions more transparent, and to reduce the ability for political considerations to impact the filling of technical positions. She added that IHEC commissioners have reengaged with the UN, and have asked it for more suggestions on ways to depoliticize the IHEC's functioning.

LOGISTICS ISSUES

¶5. (SBU) Mocibob said the Distinct Entity Trust Fund, which pays for the UN's "middle-ring" security, has received pledges from Portugal, Denmark and Germany, although the money has not yet been received by the UN. The UN was also recently informed that the South Korean contingent providing "middle-ring" security in Irbil is decreasing in size, from 36 to 20. The UN does not yet know whether this will impact their presence in Irbil, since they are reviewing the security conditions in Irbil, with a view to possibly allowing more freedom of movement for UN personnel. Mocibob added that the UN continues to engage with a South African company to provide a civilian plane with electronic counter-measures (ECM). The Secretary-General will write to

South Africa, requesting that they expedite the certification for this ECM-equipped civilian plane, so that the UN Mission in Iraq is given this independent air mobility as soon as possible.
Khalilzad